

APPROVED: Meeting No. 31-97

ATTEST: *Paula Jewell*

MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND  
Meeting No. 16-97

April 7, 1997

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, convened in Special Session in the Council Chamber, Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, on April 7, 1997, at 6:32 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Rose G. Krasnow

Councilmember Robert E. Dorsey

Councilmember James T. Marrinan

Councilmember Glennon J. Harrison

Councilmember Robert J. Wright

In attendance: City Manager Rick Kuckkahn, City Clerk Paula Jewell and City Attorney Paul Glasgow.

Re: Discussion and Instructions to staff regarding the filing of charges against Regina McAndrew as to whether or not she should be removed as a Commissioner of the Rockville Housing Authority, and related matters.

Mayor Krasnow stated the purpose of the Mayor and Council's Special Session was for discussion and instructions to staff regarding the filing of charges against Regina McAndrew as to whether or not she should be removed as a Commissioner of the Rockville Housing Authority and to also consider appointments to two vacancies on the Rockville Housing Authority (RHA).

Ms. Krasnow noted that on February 27, 1997, as a result of information that had been brought to the attention of the Mayor and Council by two former RHA employees, the City directed its independent auditors, KPMG Peat Marwick, to investigate the allegations of the two former employees.

Ms. Krasnow said that Peat Marwick's investigation began on February 28, 1997 and a written report of the results of the investigation was provided to the Mayor and Council in an Executive Session held March 25. After reviewing the report, the Mayor and Council determined that significant questions and concerns had been raised concerning the performance of Commissioner Regina McAndrew and whether she had adequately and properly fulfilled her responsibilities and duties as a commissioner. In order to address the allegations and concerns, the Mayor and Council directed that staff prepare charges against Ms. McAndrew.

Mayor Krasnow reiterated that the purpose of the Special Session was to formally give staff instructions regarding the filing of charges against Ms. McAndrew, to establish a hearing date on the charges, and to determine whether Ms. McAndrew should be temporarily suspended from her position as an RHA commissioner, pending a determination of the charges.

Upon motion of Councilmember Marrinan, duly seconded and unanimously passed, the charges against Regina McAndrew were formally filed.

Mayor Krasnow then suggested that the Mayor and Council schedule a hearing on the charges on Wednesday, May 7, 1997, at 8:00 p.m. Upon motion of

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Councilmember Wright, duly seconded and unanimously passed, the Mayor and Council established that a hearing on the charges will take place before the Mayor and Council on Wednesday, May 7, 1997 at 8:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers at Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue. The City Clerk was directed to set the hearing for that day and to notify Ms. McAndrew of the date, time and place of the hearing.

Mayor Krasnow announced that the next item of business was to consider whether Ms. McAndrew should be suspended temporarily as an RHA commissioner pending a final determination on the charges. Upon motion of Councilmember Harrison, duly seconded and unanimously passed, Regina McAndrew was suspended temporarily, effective immediately upon the filing of charges with the City Clerk, from her position as a commissioner of the Rockville Housing Authority, pending a determination on the charges.

Mayor Krasnow asked City Attorney Glasgow whether it would be appropriate for the Mayor and Council to discuss the charges prior to the May 7th hearing. Mr. Glasgow responded that since there would be a hearing on the charges, it would be inappropriate for the members of the Mayor and Council to comment on specific charges. Mr. Glasgow also advised that the Mayor and Council and City staff refrain from speculating or providing comment on the charges. Mayor Krasnow announced that copies of the charging document would be made available to the public.

Re: Appointments

Mayor Krasnow announced that the City received a letter from former RHA

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Commissioner Helen Hillstrom, requesting reappointment to the Rockville Housing Authority. In addition, a letter was received from Lloyd Welter expressing an interest in serving on the Housing Authority. Upon motion of Councilmember Marrinan, duly seconded and unanimously passed, Helen Hillstrom was reappointed to fill out her previous unexpired term on RHA, and Lloyd Welter was appointed to fill the unexpired term vacated by a former commissioner.

Re: Adjournment from Special  
Session

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, the Special Session was adjourned at 6:40 p.m., to reconvene in Worksession at 7:30 p.m. to meet with the Sign Review Board, Human Rights Commission, and Rockville Arts Place.

Re: Worksession with Sign Review  
Board

The Mayor and Council met with Sign Review Board Chairman Doug Worthing and members Bob Turner and Dana Hesse. Also present was Director of the Community Development Department Neal Herst and Linda MacDermid, Chief of Inspection Services (staff liaison for the Board). The following issues which were outlined in two memos (dated 4/24/96 and 3/6/97) from Ms. MacDermid were discussed:

1. Qualification of Sign Review Board Members - The SRB has been without an alternate member since December 1994. Despite active advertising efforts, the position is difficult to fill, particularly since the Sign Ordinance requires that one SRB member be a licensed architect. The former alternate was a licensed architect. The Board asked that

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the Mayor and Council sponsor a Text Amendment to eliminate the requirement for a licensed architect.

2. Sign Issues

- (a) Walking Signs - Mayor Krasnow commented that the City should prohibit the walking signs--meaning persons wearing signs in the form of a sandwich board or a costume. She suggested that costumed characters used to advertise a special event (e.g., a grand opening) could be excluded from the prohibition.

Councilmember Harrison suggested that the prohibition also include certain vehicle signs and he cited as an example, businesses that park trucks containing signs or directional arrows pointing to the business which are then parked in a manner with the intent to advertise that business. Ms. MacDermid clarified that such vehicles were already illegal, unless the vehicle only had the business' name on it.

- (b) Leasing Signs - Current law allows any kind of these signs in any location. However, the size limit for leasing signs is 48 square feet for up to a 2-year period and after 2 years, the sign must be reduced to 24 square feet. The Board is establishing a vacancy rate formula to be used to determine how long leasing signs can be posted.

Councilmember Harrison asked the Sign Review Board to look at the use of tombstone signs - non-lighted signs that match the business facade. Mr. Harrison pointed out that these were used in Fort Collins, Colorado.

(c) Neon Signs - The Mayor and Council discussed the use of neon signage by certain businesses, e.g., the pawn shop on Park Road. Apparently, the pawn shop is using neon signs that are excessive and greater than the permitted signage size for windows. The Sign Review Board was also asked to request that the owners of Marlo Furniture turn off their purple neon sign at a certain time of evening.

(d) Window Signs - Ms. MacDermid noted that window signs were allowed up to 20 percent of the businesses' window area.

(e) Banner Signs - The Mayor and Council indicated their willingness to allow more flexibility for these types of signs.

Staff was directed to follow up on the following items:

- A text amendment to eliminate the requirement that a member of the Sign Review Board be an architect.
- Prohibition of all walking signs. Determine whether a business could request a special exception to have costumed persons advertising certain special events.
- Look into the use of tombstone signs
- Amendment to the Sign Ordinance to prohibit certain size vehicles from using customer parking for advertising.

Mr. Herst noted that the Chamber of Commerce was sent a copy of Ms. MacDermid's memo regarding sign issues and a copy of the proposed text amendment to change the requirements for serving on the Sign Review Board.

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Mr. Kuckkahn said that staff would also take a look at some of the newer technologies for signage, e.g., liquid crystal displays, and whether the Sign Ordinance impacted these types of newer technologies. Staff was asked to study how other communities regulate neon signs and whether these were treated differently from traditional signs.

The Worksession with the Sign Review Board adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Re: Worksession with Human Rights  
Commission (HRC)

The Mayor and Council met with Human Rights Commission Chairman Douglas Jones and members William Sherman, Carol Hannaford, Claudia Segal, Lynn Perry Parker, Phillip Hesser, Lloyd Welter, Georgia Coffey, and Yasmin Lluveras. Also present were Human Rights Coordinator Teresa James (HRC staff liaison) and Personnel Director Rich Hajewski.

Mr. Jones said that HRC members were pleased with the work they accomplished and the change of focus towards community mediation. One concern of HRC is that the Montgomery County Human Relations Commission had not yet signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which would make it official for HRC to monitor the processing of cases previously processed by City staff. Councilmember Marrinan suggested that the City enlist the State Delegation's support in getting the MOU signed.

Mr. Jones pointed out that the Commission experienced an increase in the number of hate-violence incidents reported in the past year. To date, 12 cases have been

reported. Mr. Jones introduced the following chairs of HRC subcommittees who reported on the following programs.

1. Community Mediation Program Ms. Hannaford reported that HRC was pleased with the progress of the program. There were a total of 165 preliminary general intakes and 42 were referred for mediation. One hundred persons have been trained as mediators. The HRC is exploring participation in court referred mediation. Mr. Sherman suggested that the Mayor and Council advertise the community mediation program during their Walking Town Meetings.

2. Housing - Ms. Parker said that housing issues were well addressed in the City Code; however, the problem was getting protection to those residents who needed it. Some residents are not aware that they are being discriminated against. Ms. Parker suggested that the City needed to educate housing providers and institutions and make the community aware that housing issues exist. The Commission established a Housing task Force which was currently studying issues related to housing in the City. They intend to recommend that the Mayor and Council adopt a housing policy.

The Mayor and Council suggested that HRC work with different community organizations, e.g., Community Ministries of Rockville and Rockville Housing Authority. Ms. Lluveras commented on the positive relationship between the Commission and the Heritage Park Cooperative Board of Directors.

3. Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) - Mr. Sherman said that HRC reviewed the revisions to the City's Affirmative Action Plan Biannual Report to see where there was



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under utilization relative to the goals set forth in the AAP of 1994.

Mayor Krasnow expressed appreciation to the Commission for their accomplishment in getting an elevator installed at the Glenview Mansion and also for increasing their proactive involvement in the community on diversity issues. Mr. Jones said that HRC planned a kick-off for study circles on race relations, in order to encourage minorities to participate in the community. Mr. Dorsey commended HRC on their successful Martin Luther King, Jr. commemoration program held in January.

The Worksession with the Human Rights Commission adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Re: Worksession with Rockville Arts Place (RAP)

The Mayor and Council met with the following Board of Directors for Rockville Arts Place: Christine Adams, Rob Roseman, Susan Sharp and Jan Maddox. Ms. Adams distributed packages containing a variety of materials related to RAP's art programs and camps, as well as an article about Rockville Arts Place which appeared in the February 1997 issue of the AARP Bulletin. Ms. Adams reported on the following activities:

1. RAP is advertising available studio space and a grand opening for the new studios will take place in the fall.
2. RAP produces a number of education fliers and they will mail them out for any group with a mailing list.

3. RAP provides a number of recurring activities that take place at the center, seven days a week.

4. The organization is working with Way Goose and Vignolia restaurants on a project where an artist will create a bowl; the restaurants will make soup to fill the bowl. The proceeds will benefit a local homeless shelter or soup kitchen.

5. Upcoming activities sponsored by RAP are a cocktail party on April 26 and RAP's annual lottery of art objects on May 16.

Mr. Roseman explained the original concept of RAP and said that past City leaders had a vision and dream for arts in the City of Rockville. He said that the adopted Arts Master Plan stated that the City should continue to support funding of the arts. Mr. Roseman said that the Board of Directors felt that RAP fulfills its mission. He spoke about the declining contribution from the City and he felt that there was never any agreement to this. Referring to the chart of RAP recurring activities, Mr. Roseman said that without the City's support, a number of those activities would be lost and RAP would lose 10-25 participants per month. He said that RAP was a community center and it was important the public/private partnership between the City and RAP continue. He urged the Mayor and Council to keep RAP at its current level of funding.

Ms. Adams reported on RAP's efforts in seeking out and applying for art grants. She also noted that the Board was planning to increase the current 12-member board membership. A little more than 50% of the members either live or work in the City of Rockville.

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Mayor Krasnow explained that the Mayor and Council would like to provide RAP with the funds they requested and she said that the request will be considered as part of the budget process. However, she expressed a concern that with RAP's ongoing growth, the costs of providing all of the programs was becoming quite expensive.

Re: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 p.m., to convene again in Worksession on April 8, 1997 at 7:30 p.m., or at the call of the Mayor.